

Tomfoolery Lands Sergeant in Hospital

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A Marine sergeant and two buddies, all embarked in a ship, returned from liberty at 2325 and proceeded to their assigned troop berthing. All had been drinking.

The sergeant and one buddy decided to practice some combat-tactical moves on each other. Everything went OK until the buddy completed a leg-sweep maneuver, which dropped the sergeant to the deck. He didn't move for a few minutes, and, although he didn't appear to be in any pain, he did say his leg hurt.

Witnesses first thought he was joking, but the sergeant said he felt his leg was broken. Medical was called to the scene, and the sergeant soon was evacuated to a local naval hospital. Doctors diagnosed him with a spiral leg fracture and scheduled him for surgery. His BAC was down to 0.09 at the time he arrived at the hospital.

The sergeant spent 10 days in the hospital and was expected to lose 40 workdays.

As outlined in the mishap report, "This is a classic case of personnel drinking and not realizing their loss of coordination and impaired judgment." Numerous controls were in place to prevent this mishap. The one designated non-drinking buddy had a specific duty to maintain a mature and unimpaired presence the entire time but chose to drink himself. All hands received alcohol-deglamorization training before the port call, as well as guidance in the responsibilities related to being a designated non-drinker.



A Marine protects himself after being taken down with a leg sweep during a practical-application exercise in the Marine Corps martial-arts program. Unlike the sergeant in the story, though, this Marine hasn't been drinking, and what he's doing isn't horseplay.

Because the designated non-drinker in this case didn't fulfill his responsibilities, he paid a price: disciplinary action from his chain of command. **S**

While horseplay causes its share of injuries, hazing is an even more dangerous—and illegal—activity, as we learn in the story that follows.—Ed.